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Vice President Darul Uloom Karachi

Memories

(Episode 10)

Association for the Reformation of Children

Babul Islam was a Masjid located near our house, mention of which has been made previously. Hazrat Haji Muhammad Ayyub Sahab (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) used to live in a house near that Masjid,. He had many sons, among whom respected Muhammad Kaleem Sahab (May Allah Ta'ala keep him in peace and good health for a long time) was almost the same age as me. We became friends during our meetings at the Masjid for prayers, and *Alhamdulillah* this friendship has continued until today. *Mashallah* his household was a religious household. I did not get much chance to play with him, but he proposed to form an association comprising children, the aim of which was to create religious awareness among children. Accordingly, mainly due to his efforts, a (perhaps weekly) children's gathering started in the Masjid. Even though Kaleem Sahab studied in a (secular) school (perhaps in Grade seven or eight), due to the excellent upbringing he had received at home he was very knowledgeable about religious matters compared to his young age. Also, he was more adept at speaking than me. Thus, as far as I remember, he eloquently narrated the story of the acceptance of Islam by Umar (May Allah Ta'ala be pleased with him) in the first meeting, which the children liked very much. I have mentioned before that I would falter a lot while speaking. As a result, I found it very difficult to speak fluently like Kaleem Sahab. But when this children's gathering began taking place regularly, I also had to speak sometimes. For this, as far as I can remember, I would memorize some stories of a *Sahabi* from "*Hikayat-e-Sahaba*" and narrate it during the gathering. My nephew Hakeem Musharraf Husain Sahab (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him), despite staying very far from us at Bandar Road, would fully take part in this children's gathering. This gathering became such a regular thing that we thought we should give this gathering of children a name. When we could not think of any appropriate name we began calling it "Department for Propagation of Islam", and its chronicles, etc. also began being recorded in a notebook. One day our respected father (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) coincidentally saw this notebook and asked me: "What is this?" I told him everything, at which Hazrat stated: "This name is not suitable. Name it "Association for the Reformation of Children"". Subsequently, we even had a stamp made with that name. This program finally ended when we moved out from our house at Burns Road.

Arabic Language Teaching Centres

The ambassador of Syria in Pakistan, respected Jawwad Al-Murabit Sahab, despite adopting a Western appearance was a devout and religious person, and would visit our respected father (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) with great love and respect. That same year, he made a proposal to our respected

father that the Syrian Embassy, in collaboration with Darul Uloom, could help establish centres for teaching Arabic language through the Direct Method in various parts of Karachi. Our respected father liked this idea and agreed to it. Accordingly, with Darul Uloom being considered the base, such centres were established in several institutes throughout Karachi. Ustadh Muhammad Ameen Al-Misri was working as Cultural Attaché in the Syrian Embassy at the time. He not only took up the responsibility of overseeing the centres and drafting their curriculum, but also got ready to personally teach Arabic.

He began his classes in Darul Uloom. He would bring a prepared lesson every day, and would deliver it in Arabic. His method of teaching was that for each word he would practically demonstrate its meaning, and thereafter would make each student say that word, and would especially focus on accent and pronunciation. He first taught the word "*Kitab*" (book). Even though he knew that the word "*Kitab*" (book) is also used in Urdu with the same meaning and all students understood its meaning, but I remember that he must have repeated the word "*Kitab*", with a book in hand, at least fifty times. Thereafter, he made the students say the word the same number of times, so that they could pronounce it in the correct Arabic accent. Likewise, he would come with a prepared lesson every day, and would make us practice it in class. Later his lessons were compiled into a book, and were published as *Tareeqah Jadeedah Li Ta'leemil 'Arabiyyah* (A New Method for Teaching Arabic).

For the first few days, we also attended the initial lessons of Ustadh Ameen Misri (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him). Since he would prepare each day's lesson daily, he would sometimes make some students stand by him to demonstrate something. He would randomly pick a student for this, and I would often be chosen, because I was perhaps the youngest student in the class. As a result, my name also appears in the book "*Tareeqah Jadeedah*".

After some days Ustadh Ameen Misri (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) felt that there were students of varying abilities in the class, and to teach all of them at the level of "*Tareeqah Jadeedah*" was not suitable. Therefore, he divided the students into three levels according to their abilities, and we were put in Level 2. For this purpose the services of three additional Syrian teachers were acquired; Ustadh Ahmadul Ahmad, Ustadh Abdul Hameed Hashimi and Ustadh Yaseen Al-Hilu. We did not get the opportunity to benefit from Ustadh Yaseen Al-Hilu as he taught the higher-level class. But we benefited greatly from the lessons of Ustadh Ahmadul Ahmad and Ustadh Abdul Hameed Al-Hashimi.

Ustadh Ahmadul Ahmad would remain serious all the time. Once, when a special guest was to visit Darul Uloom, he told me to give a speech in Arabic on that occasion. For this, he also instructed me to prepare the speech myself. I concocted a speech by putting together whatever words I could muster, and showed it to him. I had started the speech with a mention of my lack of knowledge and my inability. Looking at this he immediately told me to avoid these kind of words as they cause the speaker to lose morale and make his speech insipid. He, thereafter, wrote a speech himself and told me to memorize it. When I had memorized it he said: "Now demonstrate to me how you will deliver the speech." I began reciting the memorized speech in our *Desi* style. "This is not how a speech is delivered" he interjected. "Come, stand next to me" he said. Thereafter he put his right foot slightly ahead of his left foot and said: "Stand like this. This will create self-confidence". He thereafter made me read each sentence and would say: "Not like this, rather say it like this." Then he would say the same sentence in a relatively

thunderous voice, and would make me repeat the same sentence until my voice acquired the required level of clarity and thunderousness. He made me practice the entire speech in this manner. When, on the day of the occasion, I made the speech according to his instructions, he showered me with accolades.

In contrast, Ustadh Abdul Hameed Hashimi was a very handsome, jovial and fashionable young man. He would not come with any written lesson, but would rather teach children Arabic while joking and having fun with them. Sometimes he would write a verse of the Quran, or a Hadith, or a literary text, and would explain its literary subtleties to us; sometimes he would explain a couplet. He would also make us practice speaking with an Arabic accent. During class, he would make some student stand beside him and would ask questions related to what was written on the black board. At the same time, he would tell various jokes, or sometimes play pranks with the student standing next to him.

One day, he was probably teaching about “*Tanaafur-e-Huroof*” (separation of letters), i.e. similar sounding letters should not be placed next to each other such that they become difficult to pronounce. As an example of this, he mentioned a story of a village fisherman. A small boat was called “*kakak*” in his native language, which comprises of three “*ka*” sounds. One day he went out fishing in his boat when he saw another man, in a boat similar to his, throwing a net in the river to catch fish. At this, he recited two couplets addressing the other man:

يا راكباً في كَكَكَ و صائداً في شَرَكَكَ
كَكَكَ كَكَكَكَ وَكَكَكَ كَكَكَكَ

Transliteration:

Yaa Raakiban Fee Kakakika Wa Saa'idan Fee Sharakika
Kakakuka Kakakakee Wa kakakee Kakakakika

Translation:

O the one riding in your boat, And catching fish with your net,
Your boat is similar to mine, And my boat is similar to yours

Writing this poem, made of sixteen “*ka*” sounds, on the black board, he invited students to read it. The students would keep faltering in reading the poem, and the others would convulse with laughter.

In short, his lessons would be very colourful and stimulating, and we would eagerly wait for his lessons. One day he clenched his fist and challengingly announced: “I will give a prize to whoever is able to open my fist.” We had several tall and heavily built students in the class; all of them took turns to try to force open his fist with all their might, but all failed. The last student to try was our classmate Maulana Abdur Razzaq Muradabadi (who later migrated to Madinah Munawwarah and passed away there), who was a strong young man and did not know the meaning of defeat. He proceeded forth with a menacing gait

and began exerting all his might. Both teacher and student became red-faced due to exertion (and the teacher appeared even more handsome in this red complexion) but he also could not open the fist. Finally, the teacher said: “OK. Let me help you a little”. Saying this he loosened his fist such that a gap appeared in the middle, so that someone could put a finger in the middle of his hand. He told Abdur Razzaq Sahab: “If you were to put a finger in my fist, perhaps it could make it easier for you to open my fist.” Abdur Razzaq Sahab swiftly put his finger in. But as soon as the finger entered the fist, the teacher forcefully tightened his fist, and the finger became stuck in the middle. Now, let alone forcing open the teacher’s fist, Abdur Razzaq Sahab himself got stuck with his finger in the teacher’s fist. On the one hand he began applying all his might to get his finger free, and on the other hand the entire class was laughing at his antics. At long last, Maulana Abdur Razzaq Sahab had to concede defeat and thereafter the teacher bestowed freedom to his finger. In short, he used to teach us Arabic phrases, idioms and conversations related to different situations, while making students have fun.

May Allah Ta’ala recompense both those teachers the best reward. They played an unforgettable part in creating a taste for Arabic language in our class. Today, when I need to communicate in Arab countries by conversation, speech or writing, people often ask if I studied in Egypt or Saudi Arabia. And they become astonished when I tell them that my entire Arabic and religious education took place only in Darul Uloom Karachi. But the reality is that whatever interest and ability for Arabic writing and speech Allah Ta’ala bestowed, the first reason for it was the teaching and training of our respected teacher Shaykhul Hadith Hazrat Maulana Sehban Mahmood Sahab (May Allah Ta’ala’s mercy be upon him); he not only taught us Arabic grammar, but he also emphasised on practicing Arabic composition. The other reason were those two Syrian teachers who would speak on some literary aspect of some text, and based on that would make us practice Arabic speaking and composition.

Initially their classes would take place in a hall in Darul Uloom Nanak Warah. Later, it moved to a school in front of Civil Hospital, and we would attend their lesson for around one hour after Asar.

That year, the following were my results which are recorded in the chronicle of Darul Uloom, dated Ramadan 1373H to Sha’ban 1374H, equivalent to May 1954 to April 1955:

Subject	Marks
<i>Qudoori</i>	47
<i>Kaafiya</i>	50
Nafhatul Arab	53
<i>Tayseerul Mantiq</i>	45
<i>Albalagha Alwaadiha</i>	50
An-Nahwul Wadih	50
<i>Mirqat</i>	45

Average: 48, Overall Grade: First class, and 1st position in Nafhatul Arab.